SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c) The posting orders in respect of all vacant posts, except for the post of Store Officer, have been issued. The post of Store Officer has been lying vacant since 14-12-93. Efforts are being made to fill it as early as possible.

Shortage of Basic Drugs in CGHS Dispensaries in Delhi

7714. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has recently been made to know the shortage of basic drugs in the CGHS dispansaries in Delhi;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what are the reasons for the deficiencies in the supply of life saving drugs in CGHS dispensaries; and

(d) what measures have been taken to remove the dificiencies?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) By and large, there are no deficiencies in the supply of life saving drugs to CGHS dispensaries. However, occasional shortages in the supply of drugs are made up through purchases from the approved local chemists.

Spread of AIDS in North-Eastern States

7715. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the North-Eastern States comprising of one percent of the national population are having as many as 16% of the country's AIDS cases;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any critical study of the causes for the rasing AIDS cases in the North-Eastern States;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof stating the annual percentage of rise in AIDS cases in these States as compared to other states identified as epi-centre of AIDS in the country; and

(d) the manner in which Government propose to tackle this growing problem?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir. 4% of the total number of reported AIDS cases in the country are from North-Eastern States. High prevalance of injecting drug and needle sharing are the main cause of rising number of AIDS cases in these States.

(c) Annual quantum of rise in AIDS cases during last one year is nearly 4.5 times in North-Eastern States as against 2.8 times in Maharashtra and 2.3. times in Tamil Nadu which are considered as epicentre States.

(d) Apart from programmes to ensure blood safety and control of sexually transmitted diseases, innovative intervention programmes are being undertaken among the injecting drug users with the help of NGOs to curtail/ step injecting drug use and needle sharing. Special awareness campaigns about the 'harm-reduction' measures are also underway. IEC campaigns for promotion/adopting of safer sex practices are also being undertaken.

Proposal to Ban Advertisements of All Tobacco Products

7716. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government contemplate stopping of advertisements of all tobacco products in the country;

(b) if so, the percentage by which the consumption of tobacco products is